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Proudly representing Eastern Washington in the United States House of Representatives

**INSIDE CONGRESS**  
**FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 8, 2002**  
**by United States Representative**  
**George R. Nethercutt, Jr.**

Welcome to this week's edition of Inside Congress. I am glad to share with you a little of my work in the national legislature. Please follow the listed links or contact my office for more information on the topics mentioned here.

**MAIL UPDATE**

Please be aware that we are still not receiving mail in our Washington, D.C. office in a timely manner. To ensure that we respond to you in an appropriate amount of time, please contact the D.C. office via phone, fax or email or contact one of our district offices. We appreciate your continued patience.

**PRESIDENT BUSH RELEASES HIS BUDGET**

Recently a pipe broke in my house. As anybody who has made emergency repairs to their home knows, these repairs are not cheap. But I paid to have it fixed because I need running water in my house. This unexpected repair has thrown my finances out of whack for the month and has made me revisit my budget.

Budgets are about choices. If there were no choices to make there would be no need for a budget; we could just spend whatever we wanted whenever we needed it. We would not keep a checkbook because there would be no need to check on our finances.

I am sure many of you remember a time when you had to stretch your food budget a little or had to make the best use of leftovers. In some respects, the budget coming out of Congress this year will be a casserole budget. We have to stretch certain areas and make due with less in other areas in order to have funding where we need it the most.

In past years we have been able to pay all of our bills in the country without having to borrow to meet expenses. I want our country to have a balanced budget for this

year. Unfortunately, necessary spending on defense, homeland security, and education combined with the two-year old recession have made attaining that goal increasingly difficult.

We would all like to drive new cars, but if you are like me, you have other expenses, such as college tuition for your children and emergency home repairs that prevent you from being able to afford a new car. So I make do with the car that I have. What parent would not forgo a new car or a vacation to provide for their children's safety and their children's education? Who among us has not put off something for ourselves so that the tuition check can be sent in to the school or a doctor's bill could be paid? We in Congress are facing similar choices this year.

This is not the budget of my choosing. I wish that the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> did not require large increases in defense and homeland security, but they do. The first responsibility of the government is to protect its citizens, both at home and abroad. I intend, as a member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, to support the President's request for additional spending. I also intend to work with the rest of the budget to ensure that we get as close to balance as we can. During this budget debate, tough choices will be made. As we go through this process, I will keep in mind what is really important for our nation and do my best to meet the needs of everyone. These are special circumstances and call for special measures to ensure that our people are safe, that our children are educated and our economy recovers. I will see to it that this budget does just that.

### **WALLA WALLA EDUCATION BUILDING RECEIVES FUNDS**

\$1.2 million has been obligated to the Washington State Department of Corrections to repair earthquake damage to the Education Building in Walla Walla.

On February 28, 2001, the Nisqually Earthquake caused damage to the building, rendering portions of it unfit for use. I am pleased to see these funds being provided for the repair of this building so that it may be used again.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will provide 75% of the project's overall cost of \$1.6 million. The remaining 25% will come from State resources. The funds are made available under the FEMA Public Assistance program, which is administered by the State of Washington Emergency Management Division.

### **URGING THE RELEASE OF BUSINESSWOMAN IN CHINA**

This week I signed a letter to President Bush urging him to raise the issue of Rebiya Kadeer's imprisonment when he meets with President Jiang Zemin in China later this month.

As you may remember, I sponsored a resolution that passed last Congress expressing the sense of Congress that she should be released by the Chinese. I also wrote a letter to Jiang last year on the same subject that has yet to be answered. Rebiya is a Uighur businesswoman, arrested by the Chinese government for revealing state secrets, a trumped charge.

I will keep you posted on the status of the letter and the negotiations.

## **LEGISLATION**

This week I became a co-sponsor of H.R. 658, introduced by Representative Wally Herger of California that would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that income averaging for farmers does not increase a farmer's liability for the alternative minimum tax (AMT). H.R. 658 eliminates the interaction between income averaging and the AMT so the full benefits of income averaging are available for farmers and ranchers. This is important to farmers and ranchers whose annual incomes may vary widely from year to year, due to conditions beyond their control.

## **ON THE FLOOR:**

Here is a recap of the legislative activity for the week:

**H.R. 577** - To require any organization that is established for the purpose of raising funds for the creation of a Presidential archival depository to disclose the sources and amounts of any funds raised. It passed 392-3. I voted Yes.

**S. 970** - To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 39 Tremont Street, Paris Hill, Maine, as the Horatio King Post Office Building. It passed 394-0. I voted Yes.

**H. Con. Res. 312** - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the tax relief provided for by the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 passed by a bipartisan majority in Congress should continue as scheduled. It passed 235-181. I voted Yes.

**H.J. Res. 82** - Recognizing the 91st birthday of Ronald Reagan. It passed 408-0. I voted Yes.

**H.R. 3394** - To authorize funding for computer and network security research and development and research fellowship programs, and for other purposes. It passed 400-12. I voted Yes.

In last week's edition of Inside Congress, it was stated that I voted in support of **H.Res. 335** - Honoring the contributions of Catholic schools. I was actually absent from voting that day as I was home with the flu and a 102 degree fever. However, had I been present, I would have voted in support of this measure.

## **SCHEDULE**

This week I addressed members of a prominent group of national business representatives regarding issues in the up-coming session of Congress. I met with Vice Admiral John Totushek, Director of the Naval Reserve. I spoke via telephone with State Representative Mark Schoesler. I spoke over the phone with John Walker, former President of Kaiser Spokane who is now President of Weirton Steel in Weirton, West Virginia. I addressed the National Association of Women's Business Owners and discussed with them issues in the up-coming session of Congress including taxes, health care and education. I met with Father Spitzer of Gonzaga University and Tony Williams of Denny Miller McBee and Associates regarding the appropriations process. Pete Johnstone, Greg Ferrel and others all stopped by to discuss farm bill issues and research related programs for peas and lentils. I met with Mike Freeman and Maria Bradford from the National Federation of the Blind to discuss the Help America Vote Act as well as Social Security disability issues. I met with Anne Golden, the President Elect of the Washington State School Directors' Association, and June Sine from the East Valley School Board, and other school board directors from Eastern Washington to discuss public education issues. Dr. Pion Berlin, President and CEO of Parents Anonymous came by with Deborah Arleque, a board member, to discuss future funding options and share many of the success stories of the program. I met with Major General Lorenz, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force; Michael Montelongo, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller; as well as Colonel Brian Kistner, Director of the Office of Budget and Appropriations. Members of the Washington Association of Independent Colleges and Universities were kind enough to stop by my office including Bill Robinson from Whitworth; Loren Anderson and Fr. Steve Sundborg from Seattle University; Kathleen Ross from Heritage College; and Dave Spangler from Saint Martins College. Mark Newbold and many other friends from eastern Washington stopped by to discuss health insurance tax legislation as well as the patient's bill of rights. They were also kind enough to supply my staff and our hallway with Washington State University's Cougar Cheese and Washington State Apples.

I met with members of the Washington Paving Association, including Bruce Cy, Mike Lee and Tim Lee regarding transportation appropriations as well as asphalt research. I met with Art Brown, CEO and Bill Booth, Vice President of Hecla Mining regarding general mining issues and the current status of the Coeur d'Alene basin. I met with Donna Erat and Bruce Agnew of the Cascadia Project to discuss security efforts along the northern border and transportation issues along the West Coast. I attended a Defense Subcommittee briefing regarding Operation Enduring Freedom given by General Tommy R. Franks, Commander in Chief of the U.S. Central Command. I met with Guy

Hurlbutt of Boise Cascade regarding the latest ecoterrorist events. I attended a Members Only classified briefing on the situation in Afghanistan. I also spoke with Congressman Bill Young, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, regarding funding projects for Eastern Washington.

On Thursday, the Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Department of Defense Comptroller Dov Zakheim briefed members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense on the Bush Administration's Fiscal Year 2003 Department of Defense budget proposal. The briefing was classified, but I am very optimistic about the funding levels they request. I also had the opportunity to meet with and talk to two local members of the National Young Leaders Conference, Jeff Galloway of Ferris High School, and Jenaline Pyle of Cheney High School, and later with Jessica Rascoff, a Presidential Classroom Student. It is always great to be able to hear from young, bright, and motivated students from Eastern Washington. I rounded out my week meeting with Mitch Friedman of Northwest Ecosystem Alliance, Charles Raimos of The Cascades Conservation Partnership, and former-Congressman Rod Chandler to trade ideas about a land exchange.

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

I always enjoy hearing from you. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance to you in any matter. Here are some of the ways you may reach me, especially if you know of others who may want to receive this report each week or would like to be removed from this mailing list:

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